

# “MY CLOSE APPLICATION TO THE LANGUAGE”:

*William Henry Collison and  
Nineteenth-Century Haida Linguistics*<sup>1</sup>

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## INTRODUCTION

**D**URING THE PAST THIRTY YEARS, there has been a gradual resurgence of interest in the role of church missionaries in the cultural development of Canada. Consequently, many aspects of the impact of missionary activity on the First Nations have been explored in numerous recent publications, and, as a result, we now know far more about such complex phenomena as the establishment of residential schools, the role of women (both Native and Euro-Canadian) in parish life, and the specific practices that characterized different varieties of indigenous Christianity.<sup>2</sup> However, despite this sustained focus, comparatively few studies have concentrated specifically on the linguistic work of the Pacific Northwest Coast missionaries. Indeed, although the academic area now generally referred to as “missionary linguistics” has come to prominence only in the last decade, it has demonstrated that a careful analysis of the linguistic notes, grammar textbooks, and translations produced by ordained, and lay, ministers based in former European colonies can help to illuminate the cultural encounters that occurred as the unavoidable consequence of colonial

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<sup>2</sup> While John Webster Grant’s *Moon of Wintertime: Missionaries and the Indians of Canada in Encounter since 1534* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1984) remains a classic account, two recent studies that address some of the topics mentioned in the main text include Susan Neylan’s “*The Heavens Are Changing*”: *Nineteenth-Century Protestant Missions and Tsimshian Christianity* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2003); and Alwyn Austin and Jamie Scott’s, eds., *Canadian Missionaries, Indigenous Peoples: Representing Religion at Home and Abroad* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2005).

expansion.<sup>3</sup> So far, this research has focused mainly on the texts compiled by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century missionaries in such areas as the Spanish Americas and Portuguese Amazonia, and, to date, there have been few comparable studies of the linguistic analyses that were produced by individuals based on the Pacific Northwest Coast. This disregard is manifest especially clearly in the sorts of historical surveys that are standardly appended to contemporary linguistic studies of the languages that are spoken in the region. To consider just one example, in his Foreword to John Enrico's epochal *Haida Dictionary*, Michael Krauss comments as follows:

During 1800-1885 ... Haida vocabularies, mostly Skidegate and Alaskan, were collected by Canadians and Americans, but there was no sustained language work ... In 1885, however, two types of sustained efforts began, American academic anthropological linguistic field research by none other than the "father" of American anthropology, Franz Boas, on the one hand and Anglican resident missionary work of Charles Harrison on the other. Unfortunately, there was no connection or cooperation between the two types of work.<sup>4</sup>

Krauss states that, before 1885, only Haida "vocabularies" were collected and that a focused missionary interest in the Haida language did not begin until Charles Harrison (?-1926) arrived on the Queen Charlotte Islands (a.k.a. Haida Gwaii) in the 1880s. While it is certainly true that Harrison published some of the first texts in, and about, the Haida language (most notably his translations from scripture and his

<sup>3</sup> Recent research into such matters has been given renewed impetus by the publication of excellent collections, such as Otto Zwartjes and Even Hovdhaugen's, eds., *Missionary Linguistics, Linguística misionera: Selected Papers from the First International Conference on Missionary Linguistics, Oslo, 13-16 March 2003* (Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2004); and Otto Zwartjes and Maria Cristina Salles Altman, eds., *Missionary Linguistics II, Linguística misionera II: Orthography and Phonology - Selected Papers from the Second International Conference on Missionary Linguistics, São Paulo, 10-13 March 2004* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2005).

<sup>4</sup> John Enrico, *Haida Dictionary: Skidegate, Masset, and Alaskan Dialects* (Alaska: Alaska Native Language Center and Sealaska Heritage Institute, 2005), vi. It is odd that Krauss should claim that there was "no connection or cooperation" between the missionaries and the anthropologists, for this was not the case. To mention just two obvious examples, Charles Harrison's *Haida Grammar* (Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, vol. 10., sec. 2, 1895, 123-223) was edited by Alexander Chamberlain, who was Franz Boas's first PhD student and a noted anthropologist, while Boas himself referred explicitly to Alfred Hall's *Grammar of the Kwagiutl Language* (Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, vol. 6, sec., 2, 1888) in his *First General Report on the Indians of British Columbia* (London: British Association for the Advancement of Science, Newcastle-upon-Tyne Meeting, The Association, 1889), 5. Indeed, the many connections that relate the work of the missionaries and the anthropologists during the late nineteenth century require more probing consideration than they have so far received.

1895 *Haida Grammar*), the claim that this research constitutes the first notable work in Haida linguistics ignores the contributions of the pre-Harrison missionaries.

As this article will attempt to demonstrate, this claim is misleading in several respects because, while it is certainly the case that the earliest studies of Haida inevitably failed to recognize some of the phonological, morphological, and syntactic patterns that modern analyses have identified, it certainly does not follow from this that such works are entirely devoid of interest and influence. Indeed, when reflecting upon the development of linguistic theory in the nineteenth century, it is often rewarding to consider the manner in which early grammatical studies attempted to accommodate and provide descriptions of linguistic forms that defy analysis when viewed from traditional Graeco-Roman and (more generally) European grammatical perspectives. In short, grammatical analyses of this kind often discover underlying, but non-trivial, cultural assumptions and preoccupations that do not necessarily manifest themselves so clearly in other sorts of texts, and, therefore, although particular linguistic details offered in the earliest accounts may be wayward at times, such studies are of considerable historical importance nonetheless.

Accordingly, this article will explore the language-focused work of William Henry Collison (1847–1922), the first Church Missionary Society (CMS) missionary to Haida Gwaii, and several aspects of his research will be addressed. For instance, the analytical linguistic approaches that he had encountered as part of his training for his missionary work are considered, as are the practical techniques that he used in order to acquire a secure knowledge of both Sm'alg yax and Haida.<sup>5</sup> However, while such topics are of fundamental importance, the following sections mainly examine the manner in which Collison analyzed the Haida language in various documents that he prepared while based in Masset. Such explorations provide insights into the complex nature of the linguistic environment that provided the context for the earliest sustained contact between the Haida people and the Euro-Canadian missionaries.

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<sup>5</sup> As usual, there are various complexities concerning the names that are used to refer to the languages spoken on the Pacific Northwest Coast. The practice here is to use the contemporary names (e.g., "Sm'alg yax" rather than "Coast Tsimshian") in the main body of the text but to retain the names (and spellings) used by the authors of the documents that are quoted as source material (e.g., "Tsimshian"). Although this convention introduces a few seeming inconsistencies, the context of the discussion usually prevents any confusion.

COMPARING AND CONTRASTING  
SM'ALGYAX AND HAIDA

It is generally accepted that Jonathan Green (1796–1878) was one of the first churchmen to travel to Haida Gwaii specifically in order to introduce Christianity to the “Indians.”<sup>6</sup> In 1827, he had journeyed to the Hawaiian Islands under the auspices of the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions, and he laboured tirelessly there until 1842. However, in 1829 he interrupted his Hawaiian work to travel to the Pacific Northwest Coast, and, during this trip, he visited Haida Gwaii. Green recorded his experiences in detail, and his notes provide intriguing insights into some of the linguistic difficulties that he encountered. Although his knowledge of Haida was necessarily sketchy, he seemingly became sufficiently familiar with Haida to be able to communicate (haltingly) with members of the indigenous communities – or, as he put it, to “stammer in their language.”<sup>7</sup> However, he did not leave a substantial body of linguistic studies, and therefore his analysis of the language had no impact on later generations of missionaries. After Green left Haida Gwaii, there was a lull in missionary activity there until November 1876, when William Henry Collison arrived in Masset. Collison had been born in Ireland (County Armagh) in 1847, and he entered the Church Missionary College in Islington in 1872. Since the linguistic studies he completed as part of his preparation for his career as a missionary no doubt influenced the manner in which he viewed the languages he encountered on the Northwest Coast, it is necessary briefly to summarize the kind of linguistic work required of him at Islington.

The motivation for the creation of Islington College in the 1820s came from a perception that the existing conventions in place for the training of the aspiring CMS missionaries had become unworkably impractical. Therefore, as Eugene Stock put it in his centenary history of the CMS, “the arrangements for training men at home were at this time occupying much of the Committee’s attention.”<sup>8</sup> Significantly, even before it existed as an institution, the college was viewed in the context of Oxford and Cambridge, and some people explicitly opposed the plans primarily

<sup>6</sup> Green’s accounts are most easily accessible in Charles Lillard, ed., *Warriors of the North Pacific: Missionary Accounts of the Northwest Coast, the Skeena and Stikine Rivers and the Klondike, 1829–1900* (Victoria: Sono Nis Press, 1984).

<sup>7</sup> Lillard, *Warriors of the North Pacific*, 49.

<sup>8</sup> Eugene Stock, *The History of the Church Missionary Society: Its Environment, Its Men and Its Works* 4 vols. (London: CMS, 1899), 1:244.

because they felt that the existing universities should be where the students were trained:

The Committee began to feel that a regular Training Institution for the Society was becoming an urgent need. Some of their friends opposed this idea, and urged that accepted candidates should be sent to the Universities; but it was ultimately agreed that while men educated independently at the universities, and then coming forward for missionary work, should be earnestly sought for, it was desirable, in the case of men of humbler station, requiring to be trained at the Society’s expense, that they should be under the more immediate supervision of the Society’s representatives. Hence the scheme ... for establishing an Institution at Islington.<sup>9</sup>

Accordingly, a suitable piece of land was purchased in 1823, and the college was inaugurated in 1825, with the twelve initial students making use of a house that happened to be on the site. The first principal, John Norman Pearson (1787-1865), oversaw the drafting of plans for a purpose-built structure that would accommodate fifty students and that would facilitate the teaching at the college. The foundation stone was laid on 31 July 1826, and the building was completed rapidly. Appropriately enough, given the type of life for which the students were being prepared, the study of languages was given special prominence in the syllabus from the very beginning of the college’s history. Latin and Greek were (obviously) taught with some rigour, along with other traditional subjects such as divinity, logic, and mathematics. However, in addition to these things, there were less typical kinds of linguistic instruction. Stock notes that the first generations of students were initially examined in the above subjects, before being required to focus specifically on more linguistic topics: “[t]he languages of the Mission-field were then regarded as an important part of the studies, and three months later, another Examination took place of the Oriental Classes conducted by Professor S. Lee, in Hebrew, Aramaic, Sanscrit, and Bengali.”<sup>10</sup> So, the CMS students were required to confront a surprisingly diverse range of languages, mainly from the Indo-European group, and the centrality of their linguistic studies is clear. The “Professor S. Lee” referred to here is Samuel Lee (1783-1852), the celebrated Orientalist, who taught at Islington College, and who was closely involved with some of the linguistic research that was published under the auspices

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 266.

of the CMS. For example, he had supervised the publication of the first Maori grammar textbook in 1820, the data for which had been collated by Thomas Kendall, and, in this kind of advisory capacity, Lee was responsible for guiding some of the early nineteenth-century research into previously unknown languages.<sup>11</sup>

If Islington College had been inaugurated with great enthusiasm and conviction, its prestige had rather waned by the time that Collison joined in the early 1870s. Indeed, as Stock notes, the college was “very far from full” during these years, with the consequence that 1876 marked “a low-water mark” in the number of recruits.<sup>12</sup> Nonetheless, Collison’s generation seems to have revived the institution somewhat, and there is no doubt that the kind of teaching that they encountered there was still linguistically focused, following the same basic pattern that Lee (and others) had established in the early days. Collison’s remarks in *In the Wake of the War Canoe* concerning his time at Islington College are unexpectedly brief, and he mainly catalogues the various future missionaries that he encountered there (including some of the men with whom he later worked as part of the CMS North Pacific Mission):

After due examinations I was accepted, and entered the Church Missionary College at Islington. Here I made the acquaintance of the students, many of whom have since become well known through their labours in the mission field. Among them were ... Keen, who went out first to the North-West America Mission, where he laboured for some seven years, and then, when compelled to return to England on account of his health, took up duty in London for some years. He afterwards volunteered again for the mission field, and, having been appointed to the North Pacific Mission, laboured among the Haida of the Queen Charlotte Islands for some eight years, and then at Metlakahtla among the Tsimsheans, where in recognition of his services, he was appointed a Canon. Hall, also, who joined the North Pacific Mission in 1877 and laboured among the Quagulth tribes for some thirty-two years, reducing their language to writing and making translations.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> For more information about early attempts to analyze Maori, see Judith Binney’s *A Life of Thomas Kendall: The Legacy of Guilt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); and Marcus Tomalin’s “...to This Rule There Are Many Exceptions’: Robert Maunsell and the Grammar of Maori,” *Historiographia Linguistica* 33, 3 (2006): 303-34.

<sup>12</sup> Stock, *History*, 3:45.

<sup>13</sup> William Henry Collison, *In the Wake of the War Canoe* (London: Seeley, Service, & Co. Ltd., 1915), 36-7.

While accounts such as this indicate that the complex social networks that connected many of the CMS missionaries were firmly established during their time at Islington, they provide no detailed information concerning the kind of linguistic tuition that the students encountered, and, consequently, the latter has to be reconstructed from other sources. Although the particular syllabuses seem to have varied from year to year, depending upon which individuals were employed to teach the students, it is highly likely that Collison would have encountered standard Greek and Latin textbooks such as G.N. Wright's *The Eton Greek Grammar* (London, 1830), and John William Donaldson's *A Complete Latin Grammar for the Use of Learners* (London, 1852) and *A Complete Greek Grammar for the Use of Students* (Cambridge, 1862). In addition, given Lee's connection with the college, it is certainly possible that his 1827 *A Grammar of the Hebrew Language* was still in use. Texts such as these would have provided Collison, and the other missionaries, with analytical frameworks (such as parts of speech, case systems, verb paradigms, tense and mood categories, and the like) with which they could approach the languages that they encountered in their inchoate parishes, and such books certainly presented different, if related, versions of the declension and conjugation tables that appear so often in the missionary linguistic texts. It should be noted, though, that, as soon as they entered into "the mission field," the opportunities for extensive linguistic study of classical and scriptural texts were comparatively limited, and certainly Collison found that he required his knowledge of Greek and Latin only intermittently. For instance, in 1879, when he was ordained priest by William Carpenter Bompas (1834-1906), the Bishop of Athabasca, he felt ill prepared for the assessment that he was required to undergo:

[A]fter an examination which lasted a week, I was ordained to priest's orders by the Bishop. He must have found my Latin and Greek rather rusty, as I had read but little of either since leaving the examination halls of my Alma Mater ... I realised that an examination of the Tsimshian and Haida languages would have been more in line with my work just then. However, the Bishop expressed himself as highly pleased with the result, which was more than I had expected ... It was greatly to his own credit that, notwithstanding the many long years of his wilderness life in the several dioceses of which he was the pioneer

bishop, he continued to keep up his study of the classical and Eastern languages; and was one of the best Sanscrit scholars of his time.<sup>14</sup>

Although Collison clearly felt that he had neglected the classical languages while he had been in North America, he seems still to have valued such linguistic studies, and he obviously admired the manner in which Bishop Bompas had managed to find time to indulge his interest in a range of Indo-European languages, despite the arduous nature of his work as a “pioneer Bishop.”

Having benefited from extensive preparation at Islington College, then, and having married Marion Goodwin, Collison was initially sent to Metlakatla, where he worked closely with William Duncan (1832-1918), the influential lay minister who had been largely responsible for enabling the community there to develop into a powerful centre for missionary work. Duncan was, and remains, a controversial figure in the history of the CMS, and, since he was one of the first missionaries to establish himself in this region, it is revealing to reflect upon the manner in which he obtained a working knowledge of Sm’algyax. Having arrived at Fort Simpson in October 1857, he began language lessons with Arthur Wellington Clah (1831-1916), and, drawing upon Duncan’s journals, Peter Murray has described these lessons as follows:

Clah started coming to his [Duncan’s] room for four hours each day. Duncan paid him \$15 a month. Their sessions became mutual learning experiences, with each picking up the other’s language. The lessons resembled a game of charades. When Duncan wanted the Tsimshian word for “cry” he would mimic crying. The same for “laugh.” Other meanings were harder to convey, such as “try.” Duncan described their routine: “I wrote his name on a slate. I said ‘you try’ and he shook his head. So I took hold of his hand with the pencil in it and I shoved his hand along, and I had quite a job getting his big hard fist to make the outlines, ‘C-l-a-h.’ ‘Now,’ I said ‘you try’ and I gave the pencil to him. ‘Tumpahluh! Tumpahluh!’ ‘Oighack! Oighack!’ he cried, which means ‘right.’ So I knew I had it. ‘Pahl’ is try. ‘Tumpahuluh’ is ‘I will try.’” Advancing in this laborious way, Duncan learned 1,500 words in the first month, which he combined into 1,100 sentences.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Collison, *Wake of the War Canoe*, 231-2.

<sup>15</sup> Peter Murray, *The Devil and Mr. Duncan* (Victoria: Sono Nis Press, 1985), 39. The remarkable life and work of Arthur Wellington Clah are discussed with great care in Neylan, *Heavens Are Changing*, especially 161-74.

By means of these rather intense lessons with Clah, Duncan was able to determine the manner in which such things as temporal particles (e.g., "Tum") and pronominals (e.g., "-uh") operate in the language, with the result that he gradually obtained a secure knowledge of the vocabulary and syntax that he encountered and was eventually able to preach fluently in Sm'algyax. These practical techniques were adopted and adapted by later missionaries on the Northwest Coast with differing degrees of success.

Given his linguistic experiences at Metlakatla, Duncan was no doubt able to offer considerable advice to Collison when the latter arrived on the West Coast twenty-five years later. Collison recorded the way in which Duncan greeted him (in November 1873), surrounded by "hundreds of the Indians," and he offered his first impressions of the evening service that he attended:

The language sounded strangely in our ears, and the responses were repeated by all as with one voice. There were no books in the native language, but the hymns and responses were sung or repeated from memory in their own tongue. Many of the Indians possessed English Bibles, and were able to find the text when given out. This was read by the preacher in English, and then translated into the Tsimshian. Though ignorant of the language, the day following our arrival found me hard at work.<sup>16</sup>

It is intriguing that, even though Duncan had been at Metlakatla for eleven years by the time Collison arrived, there were "no books" written in Sm'algyax that could be used during the service, which meant that various parts of the liturgy, including the hymns and the responses, had to be learned and repeated from memory. This practice, as well as the fact that the lessons were translated (impromptu, presumably) from English into Sm'algyax, indicate the distinctively multilingual nature of the services. At the end of the above extract, Collison refers to the "hard work" that he began the following day, and he elucidates the nature of this labour more precisely in the same chapter when he describes the schoolwork that he was responsible for overseeing. Significantly, he adds that

[i]t was this educational work which enabled me to acquire the language quickly, with the correct pronunciation. At first, the calling of the school roll was always accompanied with considerable merriment at the teacher's expense. The majority of the pupils were as

<sup>16</sup> Collison, *Wake of the War Canoe*, 44-5.

yet unbaptized, and were consequently enrolled by their own old heathen names. As I endeavoured to call these out, “Wenaluluk,” “Adda-ashkaksh,” “Tka-ashkakash,” “Weyumiyetsk,” and scores of other names even longer and more difficult, peal after peal of laughter arose from my pupils. But I did not mind. It served to show me my deficiency, which I made haste to correct. Gradually, this hilarity subsided, and I knew I was overcoming the difficulties of the pronunciation of the language.<sup>17</sup>

So, even the comparatively humdrum task of taking a daily register could provide opportunities for linguistic analysis, at least until the widespread adoption of Western names. At the very least, these occasions seem to have enabled Collison to familiarize himself with the phonological structure of Sm’algyax quite rapidly, thereby bettering his pronunciation. It is not too surprising, therefore, that, in this kind of environment, he was able rapidly to acquire a working knowledge of the language, and the speed at which he mastered the rudiments can be gauged from the reports that were sent back to the CMS and which were subsequently published (in an edited form) in the CMS *Intelligencer and Record* (hereafter *Intelligencer*). For instance, the July 1876 volume contains extracts from one of Collison’s letters, in which he notes: “Respecting the language, I am happy to state that all difficulties have vanished, and I am now enabled to speak freely in the Tsimshean tongue; consequently I alternate with Brother Duncan in conducting the service, and in preaching.”<sup>18</sup> Collison was no doubt choosing his words carefully here, and “freely” is not necessarily the same as “fluently.” Whatever the exact extent of his mastery, though, this short summary certainly suggests that he had concentrated seriously upon the task of acquiring the language during the three years that he had been at Metlakatla.

Despite his sustained interest in Sm’algyax, it was while ministering at Metlakatla that Collison first encountered the Haida traders who sporadically visited the site, and, from the very beginning of his interaction with them, he admired their maritime prowess and was intrigued by their reputation for fierceness. In addition, the Haida themselves seem to have been interested in the missionary work that they observed during their trading visits to Metlakatla, and, as a result, the CMS was pleased to be able to note that “[t]he Hydah Indians of Queen Charlotte’s Island have been asking for teachers.”<sup>19</sup> Duncan (in particular) seems to have

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>18</sup> *Intelligencer*, July 1876, vol. 1, no.7: 433.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 429.

been convinced that this extension of the North Pacific Mission was urgent, and, in the July 1876 edition of the *Intelligencer*, the plan for the establishment of an outpost in Haida Gwaii was announced. Significantly, it eventually emerged that Collison had asked to be entrusted with this onerous task, and his humble explanation emphasizes his conviction that his linguistic skills would prove to be of considerable use:

I consider it an honour of which I am unworthy to be the messenger of God to the Queen Charlotte Islanders ... I have gained a slight knowledge of this language and have written down some 300 words, and am glad to find that I can master the pronunciation to the satisfaction of a Hydah ear, as I have tested with several from different tribes. It is, perhaps, more difficult than the Tsimshean, and is made largely of nasal sounds, a "ng," "ang," in *king* and *rang* at the end of words, and a "tsl" sound at the beginning of nouns, the "sl" having the same sound as in "slay," with the distinctive "T" sound prefixed.<sup>20</sup>

Even before he arrived in Haida Gwaii, then, Collison knew that the Haida could be divided into "different tribes," and he had made use of this diversity when starting to compile a Haida wordlist. In addition, he had clearly begun to reflect upon the phonological structure of the language, and, as usual, it is intriguing to observe the manner in which he seeks to associate the Haida phonemes with their closest English equivalents (e.g., the velar nasals in *king* and *rang*). The "sound" that Collison writes as "tsl" is harder to classify because he does not provide any lexical examples. It appears to be an attempt to notate a lateral consonant of some kind, but since Haida contains both lateral affricates and lateral fricatives, it is impossible to determine which of these he is attempting to capture. Irrespective of which particular phoneme is indicated, it is not clear why he should claim that it occurs only "at the beginning of nouns," implying that it does not appear in any other contexts.

The cms was convinced of Collison's suitability, and it consented to his request to establish a mission station on Haida Gwaii. Intriguingly, this decision prompted a spontaneous testimony to his mastery of Sm'algyax from some of the Metlakatla Tsimshian. Specifically, when the community was informed that Collison would be leaving it, people were disturbed by the news, and some of his students appended their names to a protest letter that was sent to the cms authorities. In this letter, the signatories requested that someone else be sent to Haida

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

Gwaii in Collison's place. While this remarkable document praises many aspects of the latter's work amongst the Metlakatla Tsimshian, it is of particular interest because it contains the following lines: "We are so down hearted at the thought of Mr Collison leaving us as he has got acquainted into our ways he can talk our language so well now that when he preaches to us in our own language the oldest ^ and youngest people are able to understand him in the church."<sup>21</sup> This short passage illuminates various covert complexities that were no doubt often associated with different language-centred encounters that occurred up and down the Northwest Coast in the late nineteenth century. For instance, it is unlikely that idiomatic expressions such as "down hearted" and "got acquainted into," which appear in this extract, were taught in school lessons. Consequently, their presence suggests that the Tsimshian of Metlakatla regularly encountered different varieties of English that were associated with different sociolinguistic registers. Presumably, the use of such expressions in this letter suggests that it was indeed produced independently by the indigenous Metlakatla community. However that may be, the stress placed on Collison's linguistic skills certainly implies that his knowledge of Sm'algyax was impressively secure by the time he departed for Haida Gwaii in November 1876. The phrase "and youngest," which was inserted as an afterthought in the same hand, was no doubt intended to clarify that it was not only the older members of the community that were able to understand Collison when he preached. If true, then the claim that old and young alike could follow his words with equivalent ease suggests that he spoke a reasonably standard form of Sm'algyax, one that was not exclusively associated with a particular sociolinguistic group.

Despite this poignant plea, the CMS and Collison both decided to go ahead with the agreed plan; Collison travelled to Masset later that year, and he soon realized that a knowledge of Haida was an essential requirement for the work that he was required to perform. Indeed, in his "First Letter from Queen Charlotte's Islands," he particularly emphasized the importance of his language studies. Having recorded the fact that he and Marion had managed to obtain small living quarters, he goes on to note that the Masset Haida, who were understandably keen to meet their new residents, would often arrive in large numbers and remain for most of the day, with the result that the Collisons could

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<sup>21</sup> The Church Missionary Society Archive (hereafter CMS Archive), Special Collections, University of Birmingham, UK, CMS/B/OMS/CC204/22.

not eat.<sup>22</sup> Aware of the delicate complexity of these situations, Collison recognized that "[o]f course this, with many other difficulties, will be overcome by a command of their language; but any attempt to carry out order without a fair knowledge of their tongue might only insult and estrange them."<sup>23</sup>

With becoming sensitivity, he realized that his ignorance of Haida inevitably prevented him from behaving appropriately in difficult social situations; he therefore felt obliged to behave with discretion, and the hardship caused by this state of affairs was one of the things that compelled him to approach the language with special urgency. He seems to have considered his inability to speak Haida to be an impediment in other respects too. For instance, he later described the building that he had prepared for religious services and school lessons, and, in his account of this endeavour, he notes that "[i]t will meet our need *pro tem* until I know the language thoroughly, and understand the wants of the community better in every respect."<sup>24</sup> Several aspects of his missionary labour, then, were considered to be temporary, and he knowingly created some ephemeral structures (both physical and logistical) that would allow some kind of work to continue while he focused upon the task of mastering the language. Indeed, in the same letter, he refers specifically to "my close application to the language," a phrase that certainly implies careful diligence.<sup>25</sup>

Despite his good intentions, some of the members of Collison's nascent parish seem to have been reluctant to allow him to defer all significant aspects of his work there until he had become fluent in Haida. For example, although he had initially intended not to arrange "a meeting for instruction or worship" until he could speak the language with confidence, he was soon forced to alter his plans:

[A]t the end of three weeks I was induced to change my mind, as many who understood the Chinook jargon, or trading language of the North Pacific (as it is sometimes termed), earnestly requested that I should instruct them through this medium until I could speak to them in their own tongue. This I agreed to do through an interpreter, as I did not know the Chinook sufficiently to speak it myself; but several of them understood sufficient Tsimshean; and although this Chinook jargon is miserably defective in conveying Gospel truth, and very many

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<sup>22</sup> *Intelligencer*, June 1877, vol.2, no.6: 374.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Intelligencer*, June 1877, vol.2, no.6: 376.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 375.

do not understand it, yet some good has been done. A stronger spirit of inquiry has been stirred up, a greater longing to hear the Gospel in their own tongue excited.<sup>26</sup>

“Chinook jargon” was a pidgin that was used extensively up and down the Northwest Coast, and one problem raised by the above passage concerns the extent to which this pidgin was known to the Haida.<sup>27</sup> Collison claims that he eventually acceded to the request for instruction in the trade pidgin because “many” members of his parish understood it. However, only a few sentences later, he claims that Chinook Jargon is “miserably defective,” partly because “very many do not understand it.” Should one conclude from this that the majority of the Masset Haida were sufficiently familiar with Chinook Jargon to enable them to communicate with ease using it? Or should one conclude the opposite? Such matters are complicated partly by the low prestige status that was accorded to the pidgin during this period. Elsewhere in *In the Wake of the War Canoe*, Collison elaborates on these issues as follows when writing about the CMS mission in the Upper Nass:

By his translational work, the Rev. J.B. M’Cullagh has done much to enlarge and inform the minds of his Indian converts, many of whom can both read and write in their own tongue. But the great ambition of all the tribes is to know the English language; the Chinook jargon, which was formerly their only medium of inter-communication, is falling into disuse, whilst English is being freely used, both orally and by letter. They realise that a knowledge of English will open up to them a boundless field of information, both sacred and secular, and will also tend to unite them yet closer as Christians.<sup>28</sup>

Although this seems to outline an early twentieth-century view (i.e., when *In the Wake of the War Canoe* was published), it seems likely that the gradual dwindling of Chinook Jargon had already begun by the 1870s – both on the mainland and on Haida Gwaii – partly as a result of the contact with the missionaries and the resulting awareness of European culture. Indeed, this decline is attested in the writings of various contemporaneous traders and missionaries. To consider just one example, writing in 1884, Willis Eugene Everette claimed that Chinook Jargon was based on the language that had been spoken by an extinct

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> For a recent reasonably detailed overview of the Chinook Jargon, see Jim Holton, *Chinook Jargon: The Hidden Language of the Pacific Northwest* (San Leandro, CA: Wawa Press, 2004).

<sup>28</sup> Collison, *Wake of the War Canoe*, 86–7.

tribe that was "allied in language to the Haïdä," and he noted that the pidgin "is gradually becoming extinct. But it is yet used as a sort of Vólâpuk between all of the *Pacific Coast Indians and the Coast Range Indians*, from the Klamath River in California, up along the sea coast to Alaska territory."<sup>29</sup> The implication here is that, although Chinook Jargon had once been used extensively up and down the West Coast, from California to Alaska, Everette perceived it to be waning, and this is a fairly typical view that was expressed repeatedly in the late nineteenth century. Consequently, to return specifically to the Haida, it may have been the case that, while older members of the Masset community were familiar with Chinook Jargon (to differing extents), the younger generations were less likely to have acquired a detailed knowledge of it. However, at this distance, such conclusions can only ever be conjectural.

If it is difficult to determine the extent to which the Masset Haida were familiar with Chinook Jargon in the last decades of the nineteenth century, then another problem concerns their knowledge of Sm'alg yax. In the above extract, Collison acknowledges that he did not know enough of the trade pidgin to be able to preach in it unaided, and therefore he needed an interpreter to render his words into Chinook Jargon. Seemingly, the communicative chain was as follows: Collison would speak in "Tsimshian," and a translator would convert his sentences into their closest Chinook Jargon equivalents (as far as this was possible). It is likely that Albert Edenshaw frequently acted as the Sm'alg yax–Chinook Jargon translator since Collison refers to him functioning in this capacity several times in *In the Wake of the War Canoe*, and this arrangement suggests that Chinook Jargon was (at least) better known than Sm'alg yax, even though Collison observes merely that "several of them" were able to understand "Tsimshian." Whatever the exact linguistic mixture that characterized these early meetings, it is certainly clear that Collison felt himself to be severely impeded as a result of his comparative ignorance of Haida.

Given the various complexities considered above, it is no surprise to find that Collison began to learn Haida with diligent application as soon as he established himself on Haida Gwaii, and he seems to have made impressive progress since (by his own account) he was able to preach in the language, even if tentatively, only a few months after arriving on the islands. Indeed, in October 1877, he noted that he had "mastered

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<sup>29</sup> Willis Eugene Everette, "Comparative Literal Translations, The Lord's Prayer in Chinook," BC Archives, box 1, 270.

the difficulties of the language,” and, as a result of this development, he finally felt able to institute a regular “weekly prayer-meeting.”<sup>30</sup> Conveniently, like Green, Collison recorded the manner in which he started to acquire the rudiments of Haida, and, quite reasonably, he made use of the same sorts of techniques that he had utilised while learning Sm’algyax:

Remembering my success in acquiring the Tsimshean from the method I had used, I determined to adopt the same method for the Haida, and consequently succeeded in obtaining a translation of my key, which, it will be remembered, was “What is the Tsimshean name for this?” or “Gaulth sha wada Tsimshean qua?” This in the Haida is “Gushino Haadis adshi kiadagung-gung?” or “How do the Haida cause this to be named?” Such of my visitors as could understand, I now kept busy while improving my own time, and the more indolent, not willing to be continually plied with my inquiries, soon took their departure, and thus I gained a double benefit.<sup>31</sup>

While Collison’s “key” is well constructed to elicit names for entities of various kinds, he must have used other techniques to obtain information about (say) different verb forms (e.g., different tenses, moods, voices). However, the kinds of unexpected difficulties that can follow when informants are used to validate the grammatical construction of simple phrases and sentences (rather than isolated lexical items) are revealed when Collison notes:

I proceeded well in the compiling of my vocabularies, but in my endeavour to form sentences and phrases I met with a serious drawback. Having framed a sentence with the aid of one of them, I set it aside and awaited an opportunity to confirm or correct it with the aid of another Haida. But I was invariably met with the assertion that what I had written was incorrect. I was at length quite discouraged, and began to consider where the fault lay. I had noticed that on reading or repeating my sentence to any of them, their first inquiry always was “Who helped you to know that?” and that on my informing them, the rendering was at once disputed. I determined therefore not to enlighten them for the future as to who had told me. I found the trouble arose from a desire on the part of each to be accounted

<sup>30</sup> *Intelligencer*, September 1879, vol. 4, no. 9: 564.

<sup>31</sup> Collison, *Wake of the War Canoe*, 124.

more clever than others, and from this forward I made satisfactory progress.<sup>32</sup>

This anecdote amusingly encapsulates a primary sociolinguistic fact that unavoidably bedevils language study of any kind – namely, that no information concerning linguistic forms and structures is extracted in a cultural vacuum, and, therefore, informants often have complex agendas of their own, which can impede the task of supposedly objective analysis.<sup>33</sup> However, Collison eventually overcame these difficulties sufficiently to be able to communicate with ease in Haida, and, by refusing to reveal his sources, he was able to diminish the more competitive aspects of the basic process of knowledge acquisition. From this account, though, it is impossible to determine the extent to which some of the disagreements among his informers were the result of genuine dialect differences rather than mere contrariness and opportunism. Since he was based in Masset, it is reasonable to expect that the Masset dialect would dominate the speech community, but an informer more familiar with one of the other dialects that were spoken on Haida Gwaii in the late nineteenth century could easily have provided contrasting information. It is important to emphasize the existence of this diversity since, in modern analyses, it is usually the case that only three dialects of Haida are recognized: Masset, Skidegate, and Alaskan. However, these varieties were largely consolidated as the dominant forms during the late nineteenth century as the Haida people moved to these three main centres. Consequently, during the period between 1870 and 1900, it is possible that speakers of various dialects were encountered in Masset.

The passages quoted above provide a few insights into the manner in which Collison approached the task of acquiring a knowledge of Haida. However, it is clear that, from the very beginning of this work, he did not view the language in isolation. On the contrary, he consistently adopted a comparative linguistic perspective. It was noted earlier that he had become impressively proficient in Sm'algyax while he had been stationed at Metlakatla, and therefore it is no surprise to find that he became particularly interested in contrasting the two languages. For instance, he observed on more than one occasion that, when he had first arrived in Haida Gwaii, he had been surprised to find few obvious similarities between the two languages besides a few pieces of common

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 124–5.

<sup>33</sup> These problems are often discussed in introductory sociolinguistics texts such as Peter Trudgill, *Sociolinguistics: An Introduction to Language and Society*, 4th ed. (London: Penguin Books, 2000); and Miriam Meyerhoff, *Introducing Sociolinguistics* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

vocabulary, and, in his memoirs, he specifically stressed the differences between Sm'algyax and Haida:

It might be supposed that a knowledge of the Tsimshian, the language of the tribes of this name on the coast of the mainland, only a little over one hundred miles distant, would have been helpful in the acquirement of the Haida. It would have been so were there any similarity between the two languages. But there is no similarity whatever in either nomenclature, construction, or idea.<sup>34</sup>

By “nomenclature” Collison presumably meant “vocabulary.” In other words, he recognized that Haida and Sm'algyax did not share a common derived lexicon; by “construction” he presumably meant “syntax,” and some of his views concerning “ideas” in the two languages is discussed at greater length below. Given this recognition of fundamental differences, though, it is of considerable interest that, as far as Collison was concerned, Sm'algyax verbs could be analyzed using a basic Graeco-Roman analytical framework more successfully than could their Haida equivalents. Specifically, he noted that “[o]ne peculiarity of the Tsimshian is that it somewhat resembles the Latin in the person endings of the verbs,”<sup>35</sup> and in order to illustrate this point he includes the following example:

|            |                      |   |                                 |
|------------|----------------------|---|---------------------------------|
|            | <i>Didolshu</i>      | = | <i>I live.</i>                  |
|            | <i>Didolshun</i>     | = | <i>You live.</i>                |
|            | <i>Didolshuga</i>    | = | <i>He lives.</i>                |
| <i>Pl.</i> |                      |   |                                 |
|            | <i>Dildolshim</i>    | = | <i>We live.</i>                 |
|            | <i>Dildolshashim</i> | = | <i>Ye or you live.</i>          |
|            | <i>Dildolshiga</i>   | = | <i>They live.</i> <sup>36</sup> |

Clearly, paradigms such as this convinced Collison that Sm'algyax verbs manifested morphological inflections for person in a manner that recalled the conventional Greek and Latin conjugations. However, he soon recognized that Haida did not function in the same way entirely, and, to demonstrate the difference, he juxtaposed conjugation paradigms for Haida verbs such as *henung-agung* (to live):

<sup>34</sup> Collison, *Wake of the War Canoe*, 125.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

|             |                     |   |                  |
|-------------|---------------------|---|------------------|
| <i>De</i>   | <i>henung-agung</i> | = | <i>I live.</i>   |
| <i>Dung</i> | ““                  | = | <i>You live.</i> |
| <i>Il</i>   | ““                  | = | <i>He lives.</i> |

*Pl.*

|               |                 |   |                                       |
|---------------|-----------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| <i>Itil</i>   | ““              | = | <i>We live.</i>                       |
| <i>Dalung</i> | ““              | = | <i>Ye or you live.</i>                |
| <i>Il</i>     | ““              | = | <i>They (many) live.</i>              |
| <i>Il</i>     | ““ <i>anong</i> | = | <i>They (few) live.</i> <sup>37</sup> |

The conspicuous absence of inflectional features that manifest themselves morphologically led Collison to conclude that Haida could not be adequately analyzed using the same general patterns as the traditional Graeco-Roman verb paradigms that were presented in standard textbooks (such as Donaldson’s elementary Greek and Latin grammars). Indeed, in the above example, the presence of the “many” and “few” versions of the third person plural construction also indicates that the standard classical verb paradigm was deemed to be insufficient, and Collison’s willingness to avoid conventional analyses in this way is of considerable interest, especially since it is an attitude that was rejected by some of his successors in the Haida mission. To offer just one example, in his 1895 *Haida Grammar*, Charles Harrison insisted on using full conjugation tables for the Haida verbs, even though his presentation was sometimes rendered futile. When introducing the “Past Imperfect Tense,” for instance, he introduces the following table for the verb *kʷōyāda* (to love):

|               |                      |   |                                       |
|---------------|----------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| <i>Tlao</i>   | <i>kʷōyādagigini</i> | = | <i>I was loving</i>                   |
| <i>Dahou</i>  | “                    | = | <i>You were loving</i>                |
| <i>Laou</i>   | “                    | = | <i>He was loving</i>                  |
| <i>Talung</i> | “                    | = | <i>We were loving</i>                 |
| <i>Dalung</i> | “                    | = | <i>Ye were loving</i>                 |
| <i>Ltha</i>   | “                    | = | <i>They were loving</i>               |
| <i>Laou</i>   | “                    | = | <i>They were loving</i> <sup>38</sup> |

Tables such as these seem remarkably inefficient since the verb form presented is invariant, and therefore the repetition for each person, for

<sup>37</sup> Collison, *Wake of the War Canoe*, 126.

<sup>38</sup> Charles Harrison, *Haida Grammar* (Transaction of the Royal Society of Canada, Sections 2 and 7, 1895), 159. For a detailed recent discussion of Harrison’s text, see Marcus Tomalin’s “Reassessing Nineteenth-Century Missionary Linguistics on the Pacific Northwest Coast” (forthcoming in *Historiographia Linguistica* 35 [2008]).

both singular and plural number, is redundant. By contrast, Collison appears to have recognized the pointlessness of such analyses, at least for Haida, which suggests that he was less inclined to force the language into the sorts of traditional analytical patterns that he (and the other missionaries) had encountered both as schoolchildren and as students at Islington College.

So, Haida and Sm'algayax differed in terms of the "nomenclature" and "construction," and, as noted earlier, Collison also claimed that the two languages differed in terms of "idea." While this expression remains somewhat opaque, it is most likely that he is here referring to the fact that, when broken down into their constituent components, certain corresponding periphrastic structures encountered in the respective languages reveal critical underlying conceptual differences. For instance, Collison argued that the Sm'algayax phrase *Asbee Giamk* ("sunbeam") literally means "the foot or limb of the sun," while the equivalent Haida expression *Juie hunglth dagwuts* means "the eyelash of the sun,"<sup>39</sup> and he took this as evidence to show that the two languages manifest significant ideational contrasts. As he put it: "[i]n Tsimshean the idea is that the sun is as a great body, the limbs of which extend to the earth; while the Haida conception is that the sun is a great eye, of which the rays are the eyelashes."<sup>40</sup> This kind of quasi-anthropological approach, which focuses on the cultural assumptions underlying idiomatic linguistic structures, is used by Collison to substantiate his thesis that the two languages (and therefore the two corresponding cultures) are distinct.

#### THE LORD'S PRAYER

As the above discussion has indicated, Collison was interested, from an early stage, in the various differences that (unexpectedly) distinguished Sm'algayax and Haida, and his most detailed initial reflections upon these differences are manifest perhaps most extensively in a comparison of the two languages that he sent to the CMS on 3 July 1877. Intriguingly, in an accompanying letter, he notes that he has been unable to devote as much time as he would have liked to the task of learning Haida (though he was convinced that he would be able to make "rapid progress" during the winter),<sup>41</sup> and this statement appears to contradict the claim he made in October 1877 that, by this stage in his ministry, he had achieved a fluent knowledge of the language. These incidental details aside, though, it

<sup>39</sup> Collison, *Wake of the War Canoe*, 126.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> CMS Archive CMS/B/OMS/CC204/10A.

is of particular interest that, in his 3 July letter, Collison continues as follows when he introduces his comparison of Sm'algyax and Haida:

I beg to enclose a specimen of the two languages Hydah and Tsimshean in which you will see the complete difference in construction, sound, &c. As I am of opinion that the Hydah's are of Chinese or Japanese origin or possibly indirect[ly?] connected with the Ainos of Japan (though from the illustrations which lately appeared in *The Gleaner* of those people I am led to doubt it) I would like to pursue some work bearing upon the language and customs of those Races in order to ascertain more clearly.<sup>42</sup>

It is significant that Collison introduces his comparative study of Sm'algyax and Haida in the context of a series of reflections upon the (conjectured) migratory origins of the Haida people. Clearly his early experiences on Haida Gwaii had prompted him to reflect upon this subject, and, as the above extract suggests, although he was initially inclined to assume some kind of Sino-Japanese origin, his belief in such a history was becoming less secure. It is important to stress that such speculations were common at the time, though agreement about such matters was generally lacking. For instance, in 1906, John Henry Keen considered the relationship between Haida and Japanese in his *Grammar of the Haida Language*, where he commented as follows: “After having carefully examined a grammar of the Japanese language, and also corresponded with a clergyman in Japan on the subject, I am unable to trace any resemblance between that language and Haida, though the Haida type of countenance seems to me to suggest a Japanese origin.”<sup>43</sup> While, around the same time, William Ridley opined that “Haida and Japanese have the same mode of using post rather than pre-position; the same kind of case relations; indeclinability of nouns, whose number the context alone indicates; the infrequency of personal pronouns; the almost suppression of passive verbs; and the decimal system of numeration.”<sup>44</sup>

Apparently, then, although Keen was “unable to trace any resemblance” between Haida and Japanese, Ridley found numerous similarities, and given the differences that distinguish such comparative studies from the last years of the nineteenth century, it is not surprising that Collison

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> John Henry Keen, *Grammar of the Haida Language* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1895), 1.

<sup>44</sup> William Ridley, *A Grammar of the Zimshian Language, with Some Observations on the People*, BC Archives, box 3, 1812-b, pp. 13-4.

should have expressed uncertainty about this topic in the 1870s. What is of special interest, though, is the way in which his parenthetical reference to an article that had appeared in *The Gleaner* reveals the manner in which such publications enabled the CMS missionaries to contextualize their own work by considering contemporaneous accounts of other missions elsewhere in the world, and Collison seems to have been particularly intrigued by the linguistic evidence that may or may not enable such associations to be established. As the above extract indicates, perhaps partly because he was still undecided as to the origins of the Haida people, Collison was eager specifically to determine the similarities and differences that related and disassociated the various languages that he had encountered on the Northwest Coast. Consequently, it is fortunate that the “specimen” comparison to which he refers in the above passage still exists since this document provides the most extensive early evidence of his attempts to familiarize himself with the linguistic structures of Haida. More important, perhaps, it is the earliest known comparative study of the two languages that is still extant that does not focus solely on vocabulary lists, and for this reason alone, it merits close attention. Accordingly, Collison’s comparison is considered in some detail here.

In order to present his analysis as clearly as possible, Collison juxtaposed the text of the Lord’s Prayer in Sm’algyax with a version of the same lines in Haida on the same side of a single sheet of paper. In addition, he provided a reasonably detailed analysis of the first few lines of each text in the form of accompanying notes at the bottom of the page.<sup>45</sup> As an example of the manner in which Collison presents his analysis, the first line of the Sm’algyax text is given as follows:

Wee Nagwahd-um roo tsim lach-hagga  
 (a) (b) (c) (d) (e) (f)<sup>46</sup>

The alphabetical codes that are written beneath the lexical items in lines such as this simply enable the words indicated to be discussed in the

<sup>45</sup> This document is CMS/B/OMS/CC204/10 in the CMS Archive. There are a few minor anomalies concerning the text, which should be mentioned here. For instance, the handwriting is not typical of other surviving documents known to have been written by Collison. Also, the spelling “Tsimpshean” is used throughout, while Collison generally preferred the form “Tsimshean.” These small inconsistencies suggest that the document was prepared by someone other than Collison himself, and, given the fact that it is unlikely any of the Haida would have been able to write in such an elegant hand by this stage in the development of the mission, it seems likely that Marion Collison wrote out the comparison, presumably at her husband’s direction.

<sup>46</sup> CMS Archive CMS/B/OMS/CC204/10B.

notes. For instance, the corresponding analysis of the above sentence is given as follows:

1st Petition, literally 'Our great Father' (a) great, (b) father, (c) our, (d) who, (e) in (or art in) (f) heaven. The possessive pronoun 'Our' is translated by the 'um' ending of the noun 'nagwahd' = father, nearly similar to the Latin person endings.<sup>47</sup>

This example is typical of Collison's general approach. His main intention is clearly to provide a syntactic analysis for several lines of the texts in such a way as to indicate the grammatical role of each of the constituent morphemes. Consequently, we learn from his text that *Wee* ("great") is an adjective while *Nagwahd* ("father") is a noun, and so on. Sometimes, if the association between the Sm'algyax and the English is obvious, Collison does not provide a detailed discussion, and he simply associates (say) a Sm'algyax noun with its equivalent English noun. However, as the above example indicates, he occasionally elaborates upon a particular point when he wishes to clarify the manner in which the words of the Lord's Prayer have been translated. In this particular case, the comment that likens the use of the possessive suffix "-um" to "the Latin person endings" suggests that he was still intrigued by the nature of the relationship between the grammatical conventions that he observed in Sm'algyax (and Haida) and those with which he was familiar as a result of his traditional Graeco-Roman linguistic education. In this particular case, he was struck by the similarity between the manner in which possessives function in Sm'algyax and Latin.

Given Collison's well-established familiarity with Sm'algyax, it is perhaps not surprising that, in the comparative "specimen" that he sent to the CMS, he should have provided more information about the Sm'algyax translation than he did for the Haida version. However, the Haida text certainly demonstrates the manner in which he had approached the task of analyzing the language. For instance, the first line of his translation is given as follows:

Eetl Aunguan sha ish-is  
(a) (b) (c) (d) (e)

and the accompanying notes provide an analysis of this sentence

1st Petition, literally "our great Father" (a) Our, (b) father, (c) great, (d) heaven, (e) in, or literally dwelling in, existing in.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

Despite the fact that the notes provide only minimal grammatical analysis, the simple associations between the English words and their Haida counterparts enable the extent of Collison's familiarity with the language to be partially determined. For instance, he has clearly become familiar with the role and location of possessives such as "Eetl" in the NP complex, and he treats Haida as an SOV language (i.e., the main verb appears in a clause-final position). It is of interest though that, unlike the equivalent line in the Sm'algyax translation, this sentence does not contain an overt relativizer, which is certainly in keeping with conventional Haida syntax.<sup>49</sup>

In addition to these syntactic details, there are a few lexical choices that are worth mentioning here. For instance, Collison uses the word *sha* for "heaven," and yet, in the same document, he notes that this word also functions as a preposition in phrases such as

sha    lana Eehlagadass  
above city    chief<sup>50</sup>

Collison glosses this NP as "Chief of the city on high" and claims that it is the "Hydah appellation for God."<sup>51</sup> The problem here is that, if *sha* standardly functions primarily as some kind of generic locative, then a more accurate English translation of the first line of Collison's Haida Lord's Prayer would be "Our great father on high."<sup>52</sup> In the 1870s, it was something of an innovation to associate *sha* specifically with the English word "heaven" since, being primarily a function word, it had a much wider range of meanings. However, the periphrastic expression used by Collison to refer to "God" effectively forced *sha* to function as a place noun, and this was deemed to be necessary because he could find no existing word that served his purpose. This problem, of course, was one that regularly confronted missionaries who were required to translate scriptural texts into indigenous languages with which they themselves were only hesitatingly familiar: if a sufficiently similar word in the indigenous language concerned was not known to the translator, then periphrastic structures could be used.

<sup>49</sup> A detailed contemporary account of relative clauses in Haida can be found in John Enrico's *Haida Syntax* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), 1:564-656.

<sup>50</sup> CMS Archive CMS/OMS/B/CC204/10B.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid. Harrison lists *sha* as merely an "Adverb of Place" in his *Haida Grammar* (147) though he uses the compound *shalana* for "God" (132). For a more recent discussion of this lexical item, see John Enrico's *Haida Dictionary*, 604. The Chinook Jargon phrase for God was *saghalie tyee*, which means literally "great chief above," and Collison seems to have constructed his Haida NP via analogy.

<sup>52</sup> See Enrico's discussion of *saab* in Enrico, *Haida Dictionary*, 1:603-4.

Further lexical problems are posed by the word "kingdom." Collison translates this as *tsabbany* and *tow* in the Sm'algyax and Haida translations, respectively, but he feels compelled to comment as follows in the notes: "Note. as the Indians are unacquainted with kingly government the word used in both the Tsimpshean and Hydah languages is more akin to the scotch term "class", or the word 'tribe.'"<sup>53</sup> It is intriguing that Collison identifies the terms "class" and "tribe" as being distinct from the notion of kingship. Seemingly, he was persuaded that these words both suggest social structures that are not necessarily associated with the particular kind of socio-political dynastic hierarchy that typifies "kingly government," and he realized that the Sm'algyax and Haida words that he used were closer in meaning to these non-monarchical terms. This small detail reveals the sort of linguistic problems that the structure of Haida society itself posed for the early missionaries: it was impossible for them to associate the various matrilineal lineages with any of the familiar social structures that were common to European countries. From the start of his period of residence in Masset, then, Collison was required to find ways (both linguistically and socially) of adapting conventional European patterns so that they could accommodate Haida culture more easily, and the sorts of complexities that he encountered were no different to those faced by many contemporaneous missionaries throughout the world. As was usually the case in such situations, these interactions involved continual modifications, thereby constituting an ongoing dialogue in which cultural compromises could usually be reached between indigenous practices and Euro-Canadian conventions.<sup>54</sup>

Given the above discussion of Collison's 1876 translations of the Lord's Prayer, it is revealing, as a contrast, briefly to juxtapose his Haida version with a later rendering of the same text since such juxtapositions indicate how the linguistic research into Haida developed during the late nineteenth century. To take one obvious example, Collison's text can be considered in direct relation to the version that appeared as part of Charles Harrison's 1891 translation of St. Matthew's Gospel. For ease of comparison, the first lines from both texts are given below, clause by clause, and Collison's notes have been removed from his text (EN =

<sup>53</sup> CMS Archive CMS/OMS/B/CC204/10B.

<sup>54</sup> These and related issues are discussed at length (with reference to languages other than Haida) in texts such as David Chidester's *Savage Systems: Colonial and Comparative Religion in Southern Africa* (Capetown and London: Lightning Source, 1996); and Adrian Hasting's *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion, and Nationalism* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

Book of Common Prayer [BCP], line N; CN = Collison, line N; HN = Harrison, line N):

E1: Our Father which art in heaven

C1: Eetl Aunguan sha ish-is

H1: Ītil Aung shā dung isis:

E2: Hallowed be thy name

C2: Nung Hayee l quo-ya-dass

H2: agwan lth keyi unga kwoyada:

E3: Thy kingdom come

C3: Aqun l tow lung quandey

H3: agwan lth kingdom althgwi unga ista

E4: Thy will be done in Earth as it is in heaven

C4: Adshee cligay sha dung quo-dunshe king-ahn shagay king-ahn ettay

H4: Hetle tlige an dung kwuduns kingan lth shage kingan ede<sup>55</sup>

There are several intriguing differences between these versions of the text. In the lines C1/H1 and C4/H4, for instance, the ejective lateral affricate in the possessive causes problems (Collison's *tl* is changed to *til* by Harrison), while, in C4 and H4, they use *cli* and *tl*, respectively, to notate the unvoiced alveolar lateral affricate at the start of *cligay/tlige* (i.e., *tlɫɡaa*, in modern notation; lit: "earth" or "land"). These differences suggest that both men were aware of the fact that several kinds of lateral affricate were being used in different contexts. In a similar manner, in C1/H1, Collison's use of the graphemic sequence *sb* in "ish-is" contrasts with Harrison's "isis," suggesting that, while the former perceived an unvoiced post-alveolar fricative here, the latter perceived an unvoiced alveolar fricative.

While orthographical details of this sort reveal something about the phonological analyses adopted by both men, the different approaches they took to certain lexical items are apparent in such things as Harrison's decision to use the word "kingdom" in his Haida text (H3) rather than attempting to find a sufficiently synonymous Haida term (as Collison had tried to do). Presumably, Harrison felt that the idea associated with

<sup>55</sup> Collison's text can be found in cms Archive cms/OMS/B/CC204/10B, while Harrison's can be found in Harrison's *Saint Matthew Gi\_Giatlan Las, St. Matthew, Haida* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1891), 23.

"kingdom" could not be conveyed using any of the Haida nouns with which he was familiar, though the decision to import the English word directly no doubt created comprehension problems. In a similar way, the word "hallowed" also causes difficulties in both renderings. In the familiar BCP version of the text, this lexical item translates the Greek word *ἀγιασθήτω*, which in turn is derived from the verb *ἀγίζω*, which means (roughly) "to make sacred." However, Collison and Harrison both use verb forms that are derived from the Haida verb *quyaada*, which means "love; esteem; not want to part with (to NP); be tight with (to NP); take good care of; be careful with."<sup>56</sup> Consequently, Collison's text for C<sub>2</sub> means essentially "Your name is loved," while the basic import of Harrison's version, H<sub>2</sub>, is "Let your name be loved." Clearly, these translations adopt a particular stance, and it is a stance that is enforced by the existing Haida vocabulary: although "loved" and "esteemed" are not semantically equivalent to "hallowed" or "sanctified," if *quyaada* is the verb that approximates the meaning of *ἀγιασθήτω* most closely then it must be used. However, as noted above, in certain cases, Harrison was willing simply to use an English loan word when he could not find a Haida word that conveyed the same idea (e.g., "kingdom"). It is of interest, therefore, to try to determine the criteria that he used for deploying English words in his translations. Seemingly, in the case of "hallowed," he felt that the Haida vocabulary could be used without the risk of serious mistranslation.

In addition to the sorts of orthographical, phonological, and lexical differences mentioned above, the syntactic structure of certain clause pairs can be compared, and, perhaps surprisingly, the two versions are, in places, conspicuously similar. To consider lines C<sub>1</sub> and H<sub>1</sub>, the word *sha* is used to indicate "heaven" in both translations, and, indeed, the main difference concerns the manner in which the initial NP is formed, with Collison choosing to use the suffix *-uan* to indicate "great," while (appropriately enough) Harrison does not include any adjectival elements in H<sub>1</sub>. Another conspicuous contrast concerns the manner in which imperatives such as "Hallowed be thy name" and "Thy kingdom come" are rendered. For instance, while Collison simply uses simple verb forms (such as *quo-ya-dass* in C<sub>2</sub>, discussed above), Harrison repeatedly uses the periphrastic imperatives, which he associates with passive and deponent verbs in his *Haida Grammar*.<sup>57</sup> The basic structure that he

<sup>56</sup> Enrico, *Haida Dictionary*, 2:1475.

<sup>57</sup> Harrison, *Haida Grammar*, 173, 191. It is worth mentioning that, according to Harrison, *Haida Grammar* 170 "[t]he passive voice is very rarely used in the Haida language."

recommends can be generalized as “agwan lth NP V,” and this pattern is present in lines H<sub>2</sub> and H<sub>3</sub> above. Details such as these suggest that the sort of syntactic conventions that Harrison used were constructed in a rather more systematic fashion than were the equivalent structures that Collison had produced in 1877. Put simply, while the latter represented in strikingly different ways (perhaps due to his unconsolidated knowledge of the language) grammatical structures that share similar properties, Harrison seems to have devised a set of formalisms that he applied consistently when translating scriptural texts into Haida. One question, of course, which cannot be answered with ease, concerns the extent to which the formalisms that Harrison deployed accurately record the type of structures that were characteristic of the Masset dialect in the late nineteenth century.

#### THE ACQUIREMENT OF THE TONGUE

As the foregoing discussion demonstrates, Collison’s comparison of Sm’algyax and Haida translations of the Lord’s Prayer are of considerable interest for a range of reasons, and they indicate the extent of his familiarity with both languages. In the light of this remark, it is worth re-emphasizing the fact that Collison’s views concerning Haida are of particular relevance primarily because he was the first missionary to acquire a detailed working knowledge of the language. Also, since it is known that he produced “several handbooks” concerning the language that were written expressly “to assist him [i.e., his successor, George Sneath] in the acquirement of the tongue,” it is clearly the case that Collison’s grammatical expositions were available (at least initially) to the next generation of missionaries.<sup>58</sup> Indeed, he seems to have amassed a wealth of linguistically informative texts during the years that he passed in Haida Gwaii. Unfortunately, though, while his renderings of the Lord’s Prayer in Sm’algyax and Haida still exist (because they were sent to the CMS and therefore preserved in the archive), many of his other works seem to have been lost entirely. For instance, in another one of his letters concerning the linguistic research that he had accomplished in Masset, he provided the following summary of the tasks that he had accomplished while resident in Haida Gwaii:

In the development of the work I am rejoiced to report that I have succeeded beyond my expectation, and we have now portions of scripture, a catechism, the commandments and the Lord’s prayer, a general

<sup>58</sup> Collison, *Wake of the War Canoe*, 241.

confession and thanksgiving, several collects and other short passages and ten Hymns besides a series of “Short Addresses on Great subjects” all translated into or composed in the Hydah language. The short addresses are on the principal doctrines of the Xtian faith as the Fall, the Atonement, the Resurrection &c &c. As the last hymn which I have composed is a great favourite and is in rhythm without in the least injuring the force or meaning I beg to enclose a copy of it. We sing it to the tune of “Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.”<sup>59</sup>

In the detailed linguistic examples considered so far in this article, Collison was attempting to translate an existing English text (ultimately derived from the Greek, of course) into Haida; therefore the relationship between the two languages is viewed primarily from one direction (i.e., English sentences must be converted into Haida sentences) – and, if they still existed, his catechism, commandments, general confession and thanksgiving, and the short addresses would all enable similar comparisons to be made. A different perspective, though, is provided by the aforementioned hymn, which Collison wrote in Haida and then subsequently translated into English. As indicated above, he sent the hymn (with an accompanying English version), to the CMS on 2 July 1878. By this time he had been on Haida Gwaii for the best part of two years, and, as noted earlier, he claimed to have a fluent knowledge of Haida. Consequently, the text of his hymn is potentially a more intriguing source than his early comparative study of the Lord’s Prayer in Sm’algyax and Haida. It consists of four verses with a repeated refrain, and the fact that the words are set to a known tune, “Jesus of Nazareth Passeth by,” is of some use since it enables Collison’s phonological understanding of Haida to be partly reconstructed. As previously, he uses numerical encodings in order to provide a brief parse for each sentence in the hymn, and the first two lines of the first verse are presented as follows

|        |           |          |         |                       |
|--------|-----------|----------|---------|-----------------------|
| 1      | 2         | 3        | 4       |                       |
| Eetl   | wahtlewan | yenhayin | kungish | kiday                 |
| 1      | 2         | 3        | 4       | 5                     |
| Kin da | aungach   | ahl      | lelt    | kahalay <sup>60</sup> |

The corresponding lines of his English translation are:

|    |          |        |        |
|----|----------|--------|--------|
| 1  | 2        | 3      | 4      |
| We | were all | indeed | ruined |

<sup>59</sup> CMS Archive CMS/OMS/B/CC204/18.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

|     |            |     |                    |
|-----|------------|-----|--------------------|
| 1&2 | 3          | [4] | 5                  |
| Sin | had caused | our | loss <sup>61</sup> |

As with the renderings of the Lord's Prayer, these juxtaposed texts provide numerous glimpses of Collison's knowledge of Haida. For instance, the phrase *kin da aungach* is translated as the single noun "sin" in the English, and, in a marginal note, Collison clarifies this by providing a more detailed analysis:

|         |         |                                |
|---------|---------|--------------------------------|
| thing   | sinful  |                                |
| kin dah | aungach | = the evil thing <sup>62</sup> |

Details of this kind also suggest that, by July 1878, Collison had not yet managed to standardize the orthographical system that he had devised for writing Haida: the word *da* in the hymn has become *dah* in the marginal note, suggesting that (unless one of these forms was simply a spelling error) he had not yet resolved how best to transcribe the word. Other details also indicate that, while based at Masset, he had altered the system that he used to represent the phonological structure of Haida. For instance, it was noted earlier that, in the Haida version of the Lord's Prayer, he had translated "God" as *sha lana Eeblagadass*. By contrast, in the 1878 hymn, he uses the phrase *sha nung Etlagedass*, translating this as "the Chief of Heaven." Once again, this demonstrates that Collison was still striving to find a standard representation for certain Haida consonants using a modified version of the Roman alphabet, and it is the ejective lateral affricate that appears to be causing difficulties here, with *h/* and *t/* being used as alternative digraphs. These varying notations suggest that Collison was struggling to decide whether he could identify an unvoiced alveolar plosive (i.e., /t/) or a glottal fricative (i.e., /h/) at the onset of the affricate. In case such variations simply seem to be the result of carelessness or inattentiveness, it is worth quoting John Enrico's remarks concerning the orthographical system that he himself had used for representing Haida:

The author used a revised version of the 1972 Alaskan alphabet as recently as the early 1980s, and taught it to both Masset and Skidegate Haidas. But as work on the sound system progressed, changes in the alphabet became necessary. Such gradual revision is a perfectly natural part of linguistic research, which is not an overnight activity ... The author apologizes to those Haidas who would prefer to continue using

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

one of the older Haida orthographies. The change was motivated by the greater simplicity and clarity described above and called for by the typing of hundreds of pages of text and thousands of pages of dictionary. It was motivated as well by the scientific orientation of the work. That is, using one orthography for all three dialects makes it easy to see how they are historically related to one another. Haidas too should appreciate this. Using one orthography for all dialects might also increase language solidarity and facilitate cooperation among the three groups in matters of language retention.<sup>63</sup>

These remarks suggest that modifications to any orthographical system are a natural part of linguistic research, and since, in 2005, the orthography of the Haida language was still considered to be legitimately in a state of flux, it is perhaps not too astonishing that Collison should have been repeatedly revising his initial orthography during his years on Haida Gwaii.

In addition to the sorts of orthographical and phonological details discussed above, the Haida hymn also implies that Collison had brooded upon the structure of the Haida verb complex. For example, the text contains lines such as the following (and Collison's corresponding translations are given below):

|        |             |              |                      |           |
|--------|-------------|--------------|----------------------|-----------|
| 1      | 2           | 3            | 4                    |           |
| Laour  | eetl        | dah-angasho  | til washt            | Il keesho |
| 1      | 2           | 3            | 4                    |           |
| He     | our         | sins         | will wash            | away      |
| 1      | 2           | 3            | 4                    |           |
| Wyegen | eetl        | qutungay     | til squnegain        |           |
| 1      |             | 4            | 2                    | 3         |
| And    |             | will cleanse | our                  | hearts    |
| 1      | 2           | 3            | 4                    |           |
| Wyegen | eelt        | gutungay     | til ladaska-shaug    |           |
| 1      | 4           | 2            | 3                    |           |
| And    | strengthens | our          | hearts <sup>64</sup> |           |

<sup>63</sup> Enrico, *Haida Dictionary*, xii-xiii.

<sup>64</sup> CMS Archive CMS/OMS/B/CC204/10B/18.

It is the verb phrases *til washt Il keesho*, *til squnegain*, and *til ladaka-shaug* that are of particular interest here, and the lexical item *til* is mentioned specifically in Collison's accompanying notes:

The prefix "Til" gives force to the word which comes after it, in fact gives it a verbal signification as for instance in the 3rd line of the last verse "ladska shaug" is an adjective but the prefix "til" makes it a verb, strengthens or makes strong.<sup>65</sup>

The fact that Collison refers to *til* as being a "prefix" while clearly writing it as a separate word partially reveals some of the analytical difficulties that he had not yet managed to resolve. Seemingly he was still struggling to specify the manner in which Haida could be accommodated to the standard grammatical categories (e.g., parts of speech, affixes) that he had inherited from the Graeco-Roman tradition. Nonetheless, despite this, he recognized that *til* could impart some kind of causal force to a following lexical item, and this suggests that he had been compelled to analyze the structure of the Haida verb complex in more detail.<sup>66</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The missionary activity that occurred along the Pacific Northwest Coast in the late nineteenth century was, and continues to be, a controversial aspect of the socio-political transformation of British Columbia. For some contemporary commentators, the missionaries were little more than cultural vandals who wilfully annihilated the indigenous customs and traditions that they encountered.<sup>67</sup> While there can be no doubt that the work of the missionaries contributed to the undermining of many

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> In modern analyses of Haida, Collison's *til* is normally written as *tll* in the Skidegate and *tla* in the Masset dialects, respectively, and it is usually classified as an instrumental that can serve a causative function. For a detailed discussion, see the entry for *tll* in Enrico, *Haida Dictionary*, 1:662-3.

<sup>67</sup> For example, Robert Bringhurst has referred to the "cultural warfare" that was sustained by various groups, including "missionaries, government agents and traders," and he has suggested that comparable cultural destruction only occurred in Europe when "Stalin and Hitler opened their camps." See Robert Bringhurst, *A Story as Sharp as a Knife: The Classical Haida Mythtellers and Their World* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1999), 70. Intriguingly, despite his obvious advocacy of, and enthusiasm for, the pre-missionary traditions, Bringhurst's work prompted a largely negative response from the Haida community, and he was accused of appropriating and misunderstanding indigenous culture. For an insight into this important and complex debate, see John Enrico's review of Bringhurst, *Story as Sharp as a Knife*, which was originally published on <http://www.bringhurst.net> (subsequently removed, but now archived at <http://web.archived.org/web/20010124034300/http://www.bringhurst.net/>), and Robert Bringhurst's, "Since When Has Culture Been About Genetics?," *Globe and Mail*, 22 November 2000, R3.

Aboriginal social structures and practices (e.g., potlatching, tattooing, the use of traditional Haida names), in recent years the conventional belief that the missionary activity was effectively synonymous with imperialism and colonial annexation has been challenged in a range of subtle and insightful ways. Susan Neylan, for instance, has provided a thought-provoking assessment of the kinds of religious syncretism that occurred amongst the Tsimshian, focusing upon First Nations contributions to the activity of the Church.<sup>68</sup> In a similar manner, David Bebbington has repeatedly discouraged a passive acceptance of the rather simplistic belief that missions were merely "the ideological arm of territorial expansion," noting in particular that

there was no simple correlation between missions and empire. Sometimes, as in northern Nigeria at the end of the century, the British authorities discouraged evangelistic effort since it might cause public disorder. Missionaries themselves were often wary of the colonial authorities because they might do as much to corrupt the peoples under their care as to protect them. Within British territory, the advance of evangelical bodies usually owed little or nothing to government patronage, which in a formal sense had all but disappeared by the middle of the century ... Consequently, the relationship between missions and empire is much more ambiguous than it is usually supposed to be. Evangelicals were by no means consistent apologists for painting the map red.<sup>69</sup>

Since ambiguities of this kind permeated the socio-political contexts in which many late nineteenth-century missionaries lived and worked, it is perhaps no surprise that the linguistic studies they produced are often characterized by a beguiling indeterminacy. Languages are inextricably embedded in the larger cultures with which they are associated, and therefore cultural contacts of any kind invariably have linguistic implications. Certainly this was true of the encounters that occurred along the Pacific Northwest Coast in the late nineteenth century. As noted on several occasions earlier, Collison's work is of special importance in this respect, primarily because he was the first resident missionary to be stationed on Haida Gwaii, thereby becoming the first European to speak the language with confidence and fluency. Given this, and given the particular contact situation in which he was

<sup>68</sup> Susan Neylan, *The Heavens Are Changing: Nineteenth-Century Protestant Missions and Tsimshian Christianity* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002).

<sup>69</sup> David Bebbington, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism: The Age of Spurgeon and Moody* (Leicester: Inter-Variety Press, 2005), 106-7.

placed, it is intriguing to observe the manner in which he compared and contrasted familiar Western culture(s) with the indigenous cultures that he was encountering for the first time. Sometimes he made use of his prior linguistic knowledge, adapting Graeco-Roman lexical categories and verb paradigms (among other things) to argue via analogy with well-established grammatical patterns, while, at other times, he recognized explicitly that such frameworks were unable to provide adequate analyses of the linguistic phenomena that he observed. Therefore, his work neither entirely associates Sm'algyax and Haida with Western linguistic frameworks nor entirely disassociates the languages from them, and he is often content to allow various analytical concerns to remain unresolved. As a result, his assumptions about natural language appear to have been extensively revised during his ministry; he certainly did not seek merely to impose a Western model upon the languages he encountered, and, indeed, it could be argued that the Haida language reconfigured Collison's understanding of linguistic theory more than Collison reconfigured Haida in his various analyses and translations. Such positionings ensured that his linguistic work was characterized by probing ambiguities and uncertainties, and these insecurities seem to have fuelled his interest in comparative linguistics, since, as shown earlier, he spent a considerable amount of time reflecting upon the differences between Sm'algyax and Haida. Significantly, he resisted the temptation to conclude that Haida was closely related to the mainland languages, stating explicitly that it differed fundamentally in its morphological, lexical, syntactic, and phonological characteristics.

In summary, then, rather than responding to the Haida language merely by imposing inappropriate grammatical categories and rules upon it, Collison adopted an approach that was typified by assimilation and integration, and this should cause us to reconsider some of the abiding assumptions about nineteenth-century missionary approaches to indigenous languages. Indeed, several recent studies have encouraged this sort of reconsideration, and not merely with particular reference to the Pacific Northwest Coast. With reference to missionary linguistics in general, Otto Zwartjes and Even Hovdhaugen have described the situation well:

Almost without exception grammars and dictionaries were composed by missionaries for missionaries. It has been argued that this pioneer work is not interesting from a linguistic point of view, since the missionaries always follow strictly the Greco-Roman grammatical model, even imposing this system on languages which are typologically

completely different. However in recent studies linguists and historians of linguistics began to pay more attention to these work [sic] and the results of recent research demonstrate that the opposite may be closer to the truth: many works are written "in dialogue" with their predecessors, many missionaries, if not the most, had an excellent command of these "exotic" languages. These pioneers not only adopted but also in many cases adapted, or even partially abandoned the Greco-Latin model in a "revolutionary" way, focusing on the idiosyncratic features of the native languages themselves.<sup>70</sup>

This brief description of "revolutionary" linguistic models that reject "Greco-Roman" frameworks and focus on "idiosyncratic features" certainly seems to capture Collison's existing Haida-related research. However, Collison was not the only Pacific Northwest Coast missionary whose linguistic work manifests these characteristics. Indeed, the majority of his fellow missionaries adopted similarly complex approaches to the languages they encountered. For example, recent research has shown that, when Charles Harrison (one of Collison's successors at Masset) came to write his *Haida Grammar* (published in 1895), he based his work primarily upon Alfred Hall's *A Grammar of the Kwagiutl Language* (1888), essentially adapting the analytical framework that Hall had devised and inserting Haida examples into the various tables and lists in the place of Hall's Kwak'wala phrases and sentences. However, the intertextual linguistic connections run deeper still, since both Hall's and Harrison's studies appear to draw upon contemporaneous grammars of Japanese when presenting an analytical account of numerals in Kwak'wala and Haida, respectively.<sup>71</sup> Clearly, Hall and Harrison (like Collison before them) were persuaded that these indigenous languages could not be forced into standard Western grammatical frameworks, and therefore they tried to utilize other kinds of categories and classificatory techniques. Intricacies of this kind, which have been largely neglected in previous studies, reveal the extent to which the missionary linguists viewed the languages that they encountered from a range of different, often contrasting, perspectives, and there was certainly no single hegemonic framework that was crudely and unthinkingly imposed. As a result, the grammatical texts that they assembled were in effect mosaics that combined elements gleaned from a wide range of different linguistic methodologies. Ultimately, this kind of analytical heterogeneity and

<sup>70</sup> Zwartjes and Hovdhaugen, *Missionary Linguistics*, 2.

<sup>71</sup> The issues are considered at length in Tomalin, "Reassessing Nineteenth-Century Missionary Linguistics."

fragmentation (which occurred globally during this period, especially in situations involving cultural contact) helped to destabilize abiding linguistic assumptions in the late nineteenth century, creating a period of dissatisfaction and unease, and thereby prompting the more sophisticated linguistic theories that were propounded in the early twentieth century by influential figures such as Franz Boas, Edward Sapir, and Leonard Bloomfield.

After two years in Masset, Collison had produced a considerable number of linguistic analyses and translations, which he passed on to his immediate successors. Unfortunately, it was not until Charles Harrison arrived in 1882 that the mission in Masset entered another phase of comparative stability, and one area of research that has only been fleetingly addressed in this article concerns the nature of the relationship between Collison's linguistic work and the translations and grammatical textbooks that were published by subsequent missionaries to Haida Gwaii. For instance, although it is known that Harrison began to study Haida under Collison's tuition while the two men were in Metlakatla, the similarities and differences between Collison's and Harrison's grammatical accounts have never been explored.<sup>72</sup> While an exhaustive discussion of these issues cannot be presented here, it is likely that a detailed consideration of such topics could illuminate the transmission history of the linguistic research accomplished by Northwest Coast missionaries, a development that would clarify the nature of the interconnections that existed between this work and the better known later studies produced by anthropologists such as Franz Boas and John Swanton. Obviously, this is a vast research area, and it has never been considered in detail, but it is hoped that this article has at least demonstrated that these fascinating and complex topics merit more sustained attention.

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<sup>72</sup> In *Wake of the War Canoe*, Collison specifically mentions the fact that Harrison and his wife were forced by bad weather to remain in Metlakatla until March 1883, noting that this delay "enabled me to assist them in acquiring the rudiments of the language" (175).